

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Liza Estlund Olson and I am the Executive Director of SEIU 517M which represents about 8,000 state and school and local government employees. I am also a former Director of the Bureau of Workforce Transformation under Governor Granholm and the Director of Workforce Development under Governor Snyder.

Under each administration there was a change in the mission, vision and values of the various departments in which Workforce activities were housed. Each administration wants to put their stamp on how they plan to run state government and each time the employees of the state are then told to re-adjust how they should do their work. And this is why we oppose this legislation, it is also why the citizens of Michigan on multiple occasions have told governors and legislators they do not want political patronage to be part of how employees of the state are chosen for their jobs.

Mr. Cotter's comments indicate that departments 'lack the ability to establish their own individual hiring and firing protocols". EXACTLY, he also stated that "at the time, civil service protection was needed because hiring and firing of state employees focused entirely on political allegiances" and that is exactly what this legislation would lead back to. It means ALL employees would be "at will" and would live in fear everyday they could be fired because someone in their management chain was in a bad mood and chose to take it out on them.

This legislation is blaming all state employees for poor policy decisions made by this governor and this legislature and bad management by those the governor has chosen to lead the very departments you now want to give even more unbridled power to. That is why civil service is

an important mechanism to ensure that there is consistency in the hiring and firing of employees in classified civil service positions.

A fire now, ask questions later policy eliminates due process for employees and makes it virtually impossible for a fired employee to get their job back especially when their livelihood has been taken. It is especially egregious that this legislation continues to punish an employee who is successful at retaining their position by refusing to pay any legal costs incurred in proving they should not have been fired, while the state has an unlimited piggy bank from which to fight an employee's return to their position. Guilty until proven innocent and then guilty anyway. It is punitive at best and malicious at its worst.

State employees pay taxes and want competent people working next to them. They too want to see those who are failing in their jobs gone, but they also don't want to be the next scapegoat from managers that don't know how to manage.

State employees have stopped expecting appreciation for the work they do every day on behalf of the citizens of Michigan and any platitudes from the governor and legislature rings false when measured against the constant barrage of negativity state employees hear every day led by those that claim to be their biggest supporters.

Thank you.